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"TRAINING" AND "EDUCATING" MARINE CORPS OFFICERS FOR THE FUTURE

BY

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas E. Sheets
United States Marine Corps

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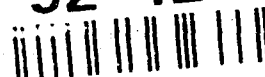
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"TRAINING" AND "EDUCATING" MARINE CORPS OFFICERS
FOR THE FUTURE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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Civilian educational theorists have debated the comparative concepts of "training" and "education" for years. The Marine Corps formally distinguishes between training and education. Training emphasizes learning to perform tasks to produce skill development and proficiency. Education, on the other hand, focuses on developing mental processes to produce a creative and analytical mind. Training and education can be thought of as a spectrum, overlapping in the middle, diverging greatly on the extremes. Traditionally, the military focus has generally been on the training end of that spectrum. Following World War II, a trend toward education began, especially for officers. Today, because of a renaissance in the study of military history and strategy--and Congressional reform after a string of military failures--officer training has become overshadowed by education. In the Marine Corps a clear trend of educational emphasis has developed. This trend could result in a highly educated, but inadequately trained officer corps. This study traces the evolution of the training-education focus in officer development; analyzes the current Marine Corps system for training and educating its officers; and makes recommendations to improve that system to better meet the challenges and requirements of the future.

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INTRODUCTION

I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.¹

Most Americans have experienced the wisdom of Confucius' words many times as they learned to perform life's essential tasks. Learning to ride a bicycle, completing income tax forms, assembling Christmas toys, tuning a car engine, and using a computer are but a few vivid examples.

Hearing, reading, and watching others goes only so far. Competency and proficiency are achieved through doing. In fact, the level of proficiency is normally a direct result of the amount of doing. Similarly, hearing, reading, and watching others are all part of the educational process, but, it is the "doing" that transforms data, information, techniques, and processes into actions and completed tasks.

In addition to individuals, most institutions have acknowledged the truth and utility of the ancient proverb. It is one of the foundations of modern learning systems--systems often characterized as training or education. The U.S. military has been on the leading edge of developing many training and education systems. Many corporate training programs, such as programmed instruction and Accomplishment Based Curriculum Design, can be traced to military initiatives.

The United States Marine Corps has been a full participant in that training and education development process. Many

Marines, however, believe that training and education are very similar, if not, synonymous. That belief is illustrated by the comments of the immediate past Director of the Marine Air Ground Training and Education Center (MAGTEC), who remarked that "any differences between training and education are so slight that they are insignificant."²

A contrasting view was offered by the distinguished military historian from the Mershon Center for Historical Studies at The Ohio State University, Allan R. Millett. He believed that the difference was not only significant, but, critical! Writing in Marine Corps Gazette, he stated, "The critical difference between training and education deserves all the attention it has received from the theorists."³ Furthermore, he translated the practical military differences to be the "differences between tactical decisionmaking and organizational leadership."⁴

Recent combat operations in Southwest Asia provide a warfighting measure of the differences. Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force in DESERT SHIELD/STORM, said that he "had plenty of majors who could quote classical military theorists, but, they didn't have a clue about how to breach the minefields in Kuwait."⁵ Moreover, he "needed field grade officers skilled in military operations at the battalion, regimental and division levels--not experts in national security strategy!"⁶

General Boomer's views represent warfighting realities, not the peacetime politics that have become popular. His concerns

strike at the heart of the "training" and "education" issue, and form the thesis of this paper: That the Marine Corps is inadvertently developing a highly educated, but inadequately trained officer corps.

This paper critically examines the Marine Corps' system, programs, and policies for training and educating officers. It will, no doubt, raise the ire and hackles of many Marines. On the surface, it will appear to fly in the face of many of the popular beliefs that have been reinforced by the recent successes in DESERT SHIELD/STORM. The prevailing attitude seems to be, "How can one argue with such overwhelming success?" The professional journals are dominated by such biased thought.

The fatal flaw in that logic is that U.S. ground forces had six months to devote to training--training that would not have been possible had the situation required immediate offensive operations. Would we have enjoyed the same degree of tactical and operational success without those six months of additional training? If not, what many people perceive to be the "lessons of DESERT STORM," may actually be the seeds of future disaster.

As a methodology, this paper will first examine the differences between training and education. Since that difference is a fundamental concept of the paper, it is necessarily covered in substantial detail. Second, it will review the Marine Corps system for training and educating its officers. The third part will present the author's observations, analysis, and conclusions. Finally, it will recommend changes to

better prepare officers for future short-notice calls to arms.

UNDERSTANDING "TRAINING" AND "EDUCATION"

To critically examine the current system for training and educating officers, it is important to differentiate between the two concepts--"training and educating." Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1553.1B, The Marine Corps Training and Education System, provides definitions for use within the Marine Corps that clearly articulate the differences.

Training and education are important, but, different tools to be used in the development of an effective fighting force. Each complements the other and they are tightly interwoven at every level of professional development...Training is the conduct of instruction, discipline, or drill; the building in of information and procedures; and the progressive repetition of tasks--the product of which is skill development and proficiency. Education is the process of moral and mental development; the drawing out of students to initiate the learning process and bring their own interpretations and energies to bear--the product of which is a creative mind.⁷

These differences are firmly rooted in traditional educational philosophy. Their application has generally been based on the desired outcomes. Training focused on what the student was expected to be able to do; education emphasized what the student was expected to know. That contrast is highlighted by different types of schools and curricula. For example, vocational-technical generally schools focus on training. The desired outcome is students who know how to perform a new skill, or an old skill better. The effectiveness of the school and the training, and the performance of the student, are generally

measured by evaluating what the student "does," compared against a standard of performance. Examples include tuning an engine, programming a computer, and troubleshooting a mechanical malfunction.

On the other hand, academic curricula focus on education. The desired outcome is students who possess greater knowledge and thought processes. The effectiveness of the school and the education, and the performance of the student, are normally measured by evaluating what a student "knows." That evaluation assigns a numerical value to the knowledge compared to a norm, a range of possible scores, or the scores of other students. Examples include the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), grade point averages (GPA), and various achievement tests.

The implication of those measurement tools of education is that the higher the score, the more one knows. Although that implication is generally true, a questionable assumption often follows that logic--the more one knows about a subject, the better he can perform related tasks. Undeniably, many factors besides knowledge and intelligence influence job performance. As a result, grades and academic achievement alone are not absolute indicators of future performance.

In the military context, the ability to produce exceptional results on the battlefield requires more than just exceptional knowledge. It requires the ability to use one's education to critically reason and to apply solutions in complex and changing environments that are complicated by the effects of human

actions, emotions, and imperfections. That ability is best developed by adding training and experience to a solid educational base. The critical point is not that training is more important than education. Rather, it is simply that training and education are both necessary to produce highly competent professionals--be they teachers, surgeons, or battalion commanders. While this may appear to be a blinding flash of the obvious to some, many others do not understand that the two processes are "different concepts which both coalesce and overlap, but which also appear in mutually exclusive terms in other contexts."⁸

In their landmark work, Soldiers and Scholars: Military Education and National Policy, John W. Masland and Laurence J Rodeway suggested that:

The whole process might be thought of as a spectrum, with "pure training" (such as a simple exercise as assembling a rifle) at one end, and "pure education" (involving the highest level of abstraction) at the other.⁹

To fully understand the current Marine Corps position on that spectrum, it is important to understand how it got to that point.

Prior to World War II, the armed forces emphasized training throughout their officer training and education institutions. That emphasis "stressed the technical knowledge relevant to military operations and the skills and attitudes expected of the military leader."¹⁰ The critical words are skills and attitudes expected of the military leader. Consequently, the pre-war military "regarded its educational system as a means to prepare the officer in peacetime for the situations he would face in

war."¹¹

Not only did World War II validate that focus, it nudged it further down the training spectrum emphasizing performance-based training and education. Understandably, "the war years focused on the immediate requirement"¹²--winning the war! That is, after all, the ultimate mission of the military. Training focused on combat and operational skills. Officer training emphasized employing units properly in varied and changing combat conditions. In part, it trained them to employ their education.

The immediate post-war experience appears to have marked the beginning of a slow, philosophical shift away from training and towards education. According to Masland and Rodeway:

The American experience in the second world war, which drastically changed the role of the United States in world affairs, naturally made a heavy impact upon professional military education, particularly after the conclusion of hostilities when there was time for reflection and the making of new plans. Officers had found that the management of fighting forces on a global scale was an even more complex undertaking than they had anticipated, involving unforeseen dimensions in depth and breadth. They were confronted with a range and variety of responsibilities far beyond their expectations.¹³

Those responsibilities are probably best highlighted by the wartime activities and achievements of Marshall, MacArthur and Eisenhower, and the statesman and governing duties they performed during the war. Consequently, the U.S. Army took the lead in changing the view of "what skills and attitudes" would be expected of future military leaders. A new concern for strategy, statesmanship, and international relations captured the attention of military trainers and educators.

Unpredictably though, forces outside of the military also

showed a strong interest in influencing the training of career officers.

The war had caused many people to think seriously about the role of the military and the education of career officers. It moved professional military men out of the shadows of relative obscurity in American society and politics into the center of the stage. Millions of people were thrown into intimate association with them, either as bearers of arms themselves, as temporary government administrators, or as industrialists, college administrators, journalists, labor leaders, clergymen, and others doing business of one sort or another with the Army and Navy. Among those brought into government service were a large number of highly qualified individuals, including such men as Henry Stimson, Frank Knox, John McCloy, James Forrestal, Ferdinand Eberstadt, and Robert Patterson, who concerned themselves with problems of the military services, including military education.¹⁴

Thus began the steady swing of the pendulum away from training and towards education. Unfortunately, the seeds of excess were sowed in that evolution. While the new plans and programs contained an appropriate emphasis on "the need for greater understanding of joint operations, and the capabilities and limitations of other services,"¹⁵ they also reflected a new "emphasis upon the development of executive talents."¹⁶

The emphasis on developing executive skills, combined with Congressional and political influence to reorient the warfighting focus of the military had adverse impact from 1945 to 1951. In his classic work, This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness, T. R. Fehrenbach details the systematic neglect of the pre-Korean War years. He is particularly critical of senior officers for not standing up to the outside influence to reform the way the military trained and educated--and otherwise, prepared for war. As a result, the U.S. military was not prepared for the Korean

War.

The initial deployment and performance of U.S. units in Korea was generally poor. A study of the performance of U.S. military units in the first battles of various wars, America's First Battles 1776-1965, highlights the disastrous effects of this and other periods of neglect. In its analysis of these first battles, Heller and Stofft conclude:

More glaring than poorly trained troops as a first battle problem is the weakness of command and control. Virtually every case study emphasizes the lack of realistic large-scale exercises before the first battle; exercises that might have taught commanders and staffs the hard, practical side of their business...¹⁷

That "hard, practical side of their business" is clearly a reference to the performing of military skills, not to accumulating additional knowledge or another degree. Their conclusion suggests deficiencies in officer training. Those deficiencies were built into an officer corps that had defeated Hitler's war machine barely six years earlier, yet, was ill-prepared for its next call-to-arms.

Following Korea, the drift toward pure education and developing executive skills continued. That trend was undoubtedly reinforced by the management and systems analysis emphasis brought to the Pentagon by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. In an officer education study directed by President Johnson in 1964, the Department of Defense concluded that "civilian executive training programs have potential for preparing officers earlier in their careers to assume increasingly responsible positions..."¹⁸ That study recommended

that:

The Services continue to send carefully selected senior officers to the top-level executive development programs; consideration be given to increasing the number who attend; and the Services consider broader use of the executive training programs below the top-level...¹⁹

"Increasingly important positions" apparently did not include commanding combat units.

During that period, the idea of preparing senior officers to be generalists blossomed. Former Army Brigadier General Peter Dawkins, a Rhodes Scholar and Ph.D. from Princeton University, described that trend as a "debilitating canard"²⁰ The generalist school, however, believed that to be effective, senior officers needed broad exposure in assignments above and beyond service in the combat arms and their own service. To do that, officers had to spend more time away from field duty and other operational assignments. The result was senior leaders with less operational experience. In the Marine Corps, officers returned to Fleet Marine Force (FMF) duty in the general order that they left--often with six to nine years in between tours!

The "generalists" and "executives" of the post-Korean War led and developed a military that was again found to be ill-prepared for the next conflict. Moreover, the politically sensitive military leaders that were to follow in the footsteps of Marshall and Eisenhower were unable to adequately influence national policy, or to keep the politicians from devising and implementing poor military strategies and policies. It was the worst of both worlds.

The educational and executive emphasis of that defense establishment produced the "body count," the "graduated response," and operations analysis mentality of the Vietnam era. It also produced the "careerism" and "ticket-punching" that seemed to characterize such a large part of the officer corps after Vietnam. Every credible analysis of the Vietnam conflict has treated those flaws in great detail. To this day, thousands of Americans still wonder how the senior military leaders could let the travesty of Vietnam occur.

Following Vietnam, another decade of ill-preparedness began. That decade produced the failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt, the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, the special operations and interservice problems in Grenada, and the missile attack of the USS STARK. All four tragedies were characterized by the failure or inability of military forces to perform military skills and to conduct military operations for which they were theoretically trained and educated.

Those failures were largely responsible for creating the perception in the U.S. Congress that they had to fix the problems of the U.S. military²¹--a perception that was unfortunately correct. The result of those perceptions was the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. So pervasive was the perception, that the Congress voted 95 to 5 in the Senate, and 383 to 27 in the House of Representatives!

As a result of the "Goldwater-Nichols" Act, and subsequent Congressional actions, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

formed a Military Education Division within the J-7 Directorate and published the Chairman's Military Education Policy Document (CMEPD). The CMEPD emphasizes joint concerns and a standard progression of military education. It drives officer education policy by directing three curriculum variables across five levels of education.

The three variables are:

- * The level of war emphasized
- * The focus of military education
- * The degree of joint emphasis.

The five levels of education are:

- * Pre-commissioning (Cadet, Midshipman, and Candidate)
- * Primary (O-1 to O-3)
- * Intermediate (O-4)
- * Senior (O-5/O-6)
- * General/Flag

Figure I illustrates and summarizes the key points of that directive.

Now, in the post-DESERT STORM euphoria, "Goldwater-Nichols" is viewed by many as having "fixed" the military deficiencies of the past. Additionally, the story of the great victory is told and retold. The Marine Corps is justifiably proud of its part. But, the question remains, "What if the U.S. forces did not have six months to plan, train, and rehearse?"

As a final note to this section, it is important to clarify a common misperception about "training." Training is not limited

GRADE	Cadet/Midn	O-1/O-2/O-3	O-4	O-5/O-6	O-7/O-8/O-9/O-10	
LEVEL OF MILITARY EDUCATION	Pre-Commissioning	Primary	Intermediate	Senior	General/Flag	
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COURSES	Service Academies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Basic and Advanced Branch or Warfare Specialty Schools- Primary Level PME Courses	Continuing Professional Education			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Capstone- Seminars / Courses
	ROTC		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Air Command & Staff College- Army Command & General Staff College- College of Naval Command & Staff- Marine Corps Command & Staff College	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Air War College- College of Naval Warfare- Army War College	PJE Phase I	
	OCS/OTS			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Industrial College of the Armed Forces- National War College	Full PJE	
				Armed Forces Staff College	PJE Phase II	
LEVEL OF WAR EMPHASIZED	Conceptual Awareness	TACTICAL		STRATEGIC		
FOCUS OF MILITARY EDUCATION	Introduction to Service Missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Warfare Specialty/ Branch Operations- Service Values- Leadership- Staff Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Theater Level Operational Art- Combined Arms/ Composite Warfare- Introduction to National Military & Security Strategy	Primary Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Service Schools: National Military Strategy- Joint Schools: National Security Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Theater Level Joint and Combined Operations- Synthesis of National Military Strategy with National Security Strategy- Synthesis of National Security Strategy with National Policymaking Requirements	
JOINT EMPHASIS (PJE Phase I at Senior & Intermediate Levels)	Joint Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">- History- Purpose- Overview	Joint Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organizations- Missions- Inter-Service Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Joint Forces and Operational Level of War- Organization and Command Relationships- Joint C3 and Intelligence- Defense Planning Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- National Military Capabilities and Command Structure- Joint Doctrine- Joint Planning- Intro to Joint/Combined Ops- Campaign Planning- Joint/Combined Warfare (Theater Context)		
FOCUS OF PJE PHASE II (NDU SCHOOLS ONLY)	Not Specified for These Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Application of Knowledge Gained at Phase I- Joint Doctrine- Joint Planning (Deliberate/Time Sensitive)- Defense Resource Management- Joint Staff Operations- Integrated Employment/Deployment of Multi-Service Forces- Joint War Game/Crisis Action & Joint Planning Exercises				

Figure I Chairman's Military Education Policy Chart

to the psychomotor domain, such as firing a rifle, or to lower-level mental activity such as memorizing data, information, procedures, or steps in a process. That misperception is illustrated by a Marine Corps Gazette article that equated training to "the parroting back of a dogmatic school solution..."²² Many Marines, however, believe that is the essence of training.

Training--the building in of information and the progressive repetition of tasks to develop skills and proficiencies--applies equally to higher level cognitive processes. Joseph C. Harless, an internationally acclaimed corporate and industrial trainer, and leader in the emerging field of performance technology emphasizes that point.

Any performance for which you can define and describe the desired result, can be trained for, measured, and evaluated... Many leadership and management skills, such as decision-making, are often referred to as soft-skills. Soft-skills mean that the performance and the desired result are more difficult to define and describe. Leaders and managers, therefore, can be trained to be better decision-makers, and to perform other skills normally thought to be higher-level, cognitive processes.²³

Colonel Harry Summers (U.S. Army, Retired) supported Harless' concept from a military perspective, while differentiating between training and education. In a lecture to the U.S. Army War College, he emphasized that "you can train for the known; for the unknown, you educate."²⁴ Training for the known equates to Harless' defining and describing desired results.

**THE MARINE CORPS SYSTEM FOR
TRAINING AND EDUCATING OFFICERS**

A review of the Marine Corps system for training and educating its officers starts with Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1553.1B: The Marine Corps Training and Education System. Its purpose is "to establish a Total Force system for training and education in the Marine Corps, and to delineate responsibilities for the implementation of that system."²⁵ It was published to support the consolidating of training and education headquarters into the Marine Air-Ground Training and Education Center (MAGTEC) at Quantico, Virginia.

By its purpose, that order sounds like a single-source document that delineates a total system--training and education, individual and unit, formal and informal. It does not. It includes only six pages of text, two charts, and 12 pages of definitions. There is not a single reference to "officer" training or education. Consequently, it provides little guidance, direction, or information on which a total system could be based. Unfortunately, neither does any other order!

It does, however, delineate six important policy considerations.

- * Provides standard definitions for all training and education terms.

- * Differentiates between training and education.

- * Assigns operational control, technical direction, and coordination responsibilities for all Marine Corps formal schools

and training centers to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC).

- * Establishes the Systematic Approach to Training (SAT) as the methodology for all training and education.

- * Establishes Individual Training Standards (ITS) and Mission Performance Standards (MPS) as the bases for all training and education in formal schools.

- * Identifies MCO P1553.4: Professional Military Education (PME) as the source document for all PME.

MCO P1553.4 is a much more comprehensive document. Its purpose is "to define objectives, policies, programs, and responsibilities for coordinating the professional military education of all Marines."²⁶ This recent order achieved three important things. First, it consolidated numerous PME programs and policies that had been promulgated by numerous orders, bulletins, and "All-Marine" messages (ALMARS). Second, it implemented the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff's (JCS) guidance established by the Chairman's Military Education Policy Document. Finally, it articulated the same definitions and differences between training and education as MCO 1553.1B.

This PME order established Marine Corps policies exactly as directed by the Chairman, JCS. Those policies prescribed who should attend the various levels of PME, and the level of war to be emphasized, the focus of military education, and the degree of joint emphasis for each level. The Marine Corps has clearly attempted to execute the Chairman's guidance.

At the "Primary Level," the Marine Corps differentiates between the "entry level" and the "career level." The Army makes a similar distinction as "Basic" and "Advanced." In the Marine Corps, the primary level is The Basic School (TBS), a six-month school for all newly commissioned lieutenants. Its purpose is

To provide newly commissioned officers a basic professional education and to instill in them the esprit and leadership traditional to the Marine Corps in order to prepare them to assume the duties and responsibilities of company-grade officers in the field and in garrison. Additionally, the Officer Basic Course provides a basic understanding of infantry skills so that the graduate can properly support ground combat operations and can also perform infantry duties.²⁷

There is widespread support for and a high opinion of the quality of training and education conducted at TBS. In a formal written survey of 50 field grade officers conducted by the author, 98 percent "strongly agreed or agreed that TBS was doing an adequate job of preparing lieutenants for their initial assignment in the Marine Corps."²⁸

While no PME schools exist for first lieutenants, Marine captains can attend either the Amphibious Warfare School (AWS), the Communications Officer School (COS), or other service Career Level Schools (CLS), such as the U.S. Army's "Officer Advanced Courses." Annually, 323 captains attend CLS, which only allows 22-24 percent of all captains to attend CLS.²⁹ Historically, 80 to 85 percent of the graduating CLS students have been assigned to the Fleet Marine Force.³⁰

Majors aspire to attend Intermediate Level School (ILS). ILS schools include the Marine Corps Command and Staff College (MCC&SC), the Naval College of Command and Staff, the Army

Command and General Staff College, the Air War College, and similar schools of several other nations. Annually, 164 majors attend an ILS, but only 30 percent of all majors attend an ILS during their careers.³¹ Each year, approximately 20 to 25 percent of the Marine Corps ILS students are assigned to the FMF.³² That percentage contrasts greatly with the 80 to 85 percent of CLS students. Since 75 to 80 percent of the students go to non-FMF assignments, the curriculum reflects a broad, generalist approach.

Lieutenant colonels and first year colonels are eligible to be selected to attend "Top Level School" (TLS). These schools include the Marine Corps War College, the National War College, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and TLS equivalent fellowships at civilian universities and institutions. Additionally, a very small number of officers attend the national war colleges of some of our allies. Annually, about 80 officers attend a TLS, which only allows about six percent of all lieutenant colonels to attend a TLS during their careers.³³

A review of formal PME schools would be incomplete without a review of the purpose, or mission, of each school. Collectively, these missions provide additional insight into the intent, impact, and progression of PME school policy.

The purpose of the Amphibious Warfare School (AWS) is:

To prepare Marine captains and selected officers from other services and nations for the conduct of Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) operations at the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) levels within a joint and combined context.³⁴

The purpose of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College (MCC&SC) is :

To provide intermediate level Professional Military Education for field grade officers of the Marine Corps and other services and nations to prepare for command and staff duties with Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF's) and assignments with departmental, joint, and high-level service organizations.³⁵

The second year program at the MCC&SC, the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) is intended:

To provide selected MCC&SC graduates a graduate-level military education program tailored to amplify and complement the comprehensive foundations in warfighting provided during the Command and Staff College curriculum, focusing on the link between war planning and warfighting.³⁶

The Marine Corps War College mission is:

To prepare graduates for responsibilities as a member of the Command and Staff College faculty, and for follow-on senior command and staff responsibilities requiring exceptional operational competence, sound military judgment, and strategic thinking.³⁷

The Marine Corps PME order, MCO P1553.4, also prescribes two other instruments of PME: the Professional Reading Program and Structured Self Study. The Professional Reading Program provides lists of titles, sorted by rank, from which officers are required to read at least two selections a year. Additionally, a "Commandant's Choice" is published annually that every Marine is expected to read during the next year.

Structured Self Study includes several activities that are designed to assist the individual Marine in advancing his PME. The primary aspect of this program is nonresident, or correspondence, courses. These programs include the Warfighting Skills Program for first lieutenants; the Nonresident AWS Program for captains; and the Nonresident MCC&SC Program for majors.

These PME courses are all published by the Marine Corps Institute. The Warfighting Skills course provides instruction in maneuver warfare at the platoon and company level. The AWS and MCC&SC nonresident programs are designed to be completed by those officers who do not attend those resident schools.

These courses provide some of the instruction contained in the resident school program of instruction. Marines are also encouraged to complete specialized skill training courses from the Marine Corps Institute, such as Patrolling, Weapons, Small Unit Tactics, and Supporting Arms. Additionally, nonresident PME courses from other services, such as the Infantry, Armor, Artillery, Engineer, and Aviation Schools are highly recommended.

Although not a written policy, the previous Commandant of the Marine Corps had maintained that "completing the nonresident program counts the same as completing the resident school."³⁸ Further evidence of this policy was highlighted by Brigadier General James R. Davis, President of the Marine Corps University, when he reported that the Fiscal Year 1992 Lieutenant Colonel Selection Board "gave equal consideration to the nonresident MCC&SC program as to the resident school."³⁹

An informal review of current battalion/squadron commanders, MEU/Regimental/Group commanders, and general officers does not appear to support those claims of equality. If it were true, there should be a substantial proportion of nonresident school graduates among those commanders and generals. It is clearly not the case. Based on a formal survey of 50 field grade officers

conducted by the author, very few officers believe that the two accomplishments are equal⁴⁰.

Similarly, MCO P1553.4, PME, claims that, "Ultimately, Marines are responsible for their own professional development."⁴¹ That appeal to professionalism and the lifelong study of the profession of arms is understandable, and to an extent, praiseworthy. It does, however, raise a few questions. Does the Marine Corps really intend for the welfare of its Marines and the readiness of the Corps to be dependent upon the ability of the individual officer to ensure his own professional development? To what standards do individual officers train themselves? How are resources allocated to assist the process? How do necessary techniques and procedures get standardized?

In an interview with the author, Lieutenant General Walter Boomer, who now commands the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, expressed concern over these exact questions. Although the individual officer must actively participate in his own training and education, the responsibility for producing competent and prepared combat leaders rests with the Marine Corps.

Finally, the Marine Corps has historically emphasized decentralized training and centralized education. Headquarters Marine Corps controlled the education policy and managed its execution. On the other hand, unit commanders have traditionally borne the brunt and the responsibility for training. Consequently, training and education have lived in different

OBSERVATIONS, ANALYSIS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The Marine Corps has initiated several structural changes that have significant potential to streamline and improve its training and education system. At the top, it has consolidated previously dispersed activities into the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC). That action resembles a similar step taken by the U.S. Army in 1975 when it created the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Consolidating training and education activities and responsibilities should foster greater standardization in policy and program development. More importantly, however, the Marine Corps now has the Commanding General of MCCDC, a lieutenant general, as an advocate for both training and education in the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS).

Additionally, MCCDC has begun to provide the policy, support, and coordination necessary to make the best use of declining resources. As part of MCCDC, the Marine Corps University has been created under the leadership of a brigadier general. It consists of the Staff Non-Commissioned Officers Academy, The Basic School, Amphibious Warfare School, Communications Officer School, Command and Staff College, and the Marine Corps War College. While progress normally lags behind change, these changes will help complete the long overdue integration of training and education, and will certainly be a catalyst for continued progress.

Any school or university is only as good as its faculty. The faculties of Marine Corps schools have been a target of severe criticism in the past. In their case for military reform, America Can Win, Senator Gary Hart and William S. Lind painted a bleak picture.

While the faculties at (AWS and MCC&SC) include some highly competent individuals, the general quality is low, reflecting the low priority the schools have at the personnel office. Faculty preparation is almost nil..."⁴²

Similarly, the internationally acclaimed, military historian, Martin van Creveld, has been equally critical of faculty selection, training, and retention in numerous works, including his book, The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance.⁴³

While most Marines probably believe the criticisms to be exaggerated, the leadership of the Corps recognized the need for improvement. Consequently, the Marine Corps has placed a high priority on attracting and developing a top quality faculty. For example, lieutenant colonels are selected to attend the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR) for the specific purpose of preparing them to serve a two-year tour on the faculty of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, or on the staff of the Marine Corps University. Using MCWAR as a faculty development instrument reflects innovative thinking and a strong commitment to developing a first class faculty. Additionally, the MCC&SC is in the process of adding a civilian Ph.D. to each Seminar Group. These noted civilians will provide additional professional expertise and stability to the War College environment. Finally,

the Commandant of the Marine Corps now personally approves the assignment of colonels to serve as Directors of the Amphibious Warfare School and the Command and Staff College.

The School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) merits special note. Although it is relatively small, it has added measurably to the Marine Corps Command and Staff College (MCC&SC) and to the officer PME system. Completing two years of concentrated study, the 12 officers selected to attend this course are in high demand by FMF commanders. This "second year" concept was a U.S. Army initiative that the Marine Corps was wise to copy.

Those improvements notwithstanding, notable deficiencies remain. The emphasis on reading, study, and strategy has masked the realistic battlefield concerns of operational-level commanders. The concerns expressed by Lieutenant General Boomer for field grade officers better skilled in military operations at the battalion, regimental, and division levels is a clear example.

For officers to become more skilled in the tactical and operational levels of war, the training and education systems must provide more opportunities to "develop those skills." During an address of the U.S. Army War College in December 1991, General Boomer declared that, "Contrary to popular opinion, tactics is not a dirty word!"⁴⁴ The class, that had been drenched in strategy and the high-level defense bureaucracy erupted in applause and approval.

To increase skill proficiency, training must be increased--

and **doing** is the essence of training! It is difficult, however, to focus on "doing" when there is no singular system, strategy, directive, or program for officer training and education that tells officers what they are expected to be able to do. In 1984, the U.S. Army's Professional Development of Officers Study (PDOS) noted a similar absence of an "education and training strategy which will more efficiently meet tomorrow's challenges."⁴⁵ In March 1992, the U.S. Air Force has noted the same deficiency. General Merrill A. McPeak, Air Force Chief of Staff, observed that:

The training process has evolved as a reflex action, and has grown up over the years as a collection of responses to individual problems...No one has ever done a systematic review of the whole learning process and structures that support it.⁴⁶

That description applies to the Marine Corps also. The absence of a centralized strategy should be of equal concern to Marines today. Without a centralized strategy or system, school curricula, unit training programs, and individual professional study vary too much from year to year, unit to unit, and Marine to Marine. The "stand alone" order on Professional Military Education is a good start, but, it does not address training. The presence of a comprehensive education order and the absence of one for training is understandable. It is the logical result of **training** and **education** not being represented by the same general officer in the PPBS and the Marine Corps structure.

One of the basic elements of an officer training strategy, or plan, should be the tasks and standards of performance expected of officers. Although Marine Corps orders state that

all formal school curricula, as well as unit training, will be based on Individual Training Standards (ITS's), those standards do not exist for Marine officers!⁴⁷

ITS's would be the medium through which the Marine Corps formally establishes what all officers of each MOS and grade will be expected to do. Without those ITS's, school curricula are uncoordinated at best, free-lanced at worst. The focus and quality of unit training becomes too dependent on the skills and abilities of unit commanders, and receives little centralized resourcing. Individual officers lack standards by which to guide or measure their abilities and their structured self-study.

Ironically, ITS's do exist for enlisted Marines! Numerous training support resources have been developed--based on those standards--to aid individual Marines and unit commanders. Field-proof publications such as the Marine Battle Skills/Essential Subjects (MBST/ES) Handbook and the Battle Drill Guide series have been universally praised. Requests continue to exceed the exceptionally large supply published by the Marine Corps Institute.

When the Army TRADOC identified the same deficiency in 1976, General William E. Depuy, its first commander, convened a formal study to determine what action should be taken. That study, A Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO), recommended that a system of "Military Qualification Standards (MQS) be established for officers."⁴⁸ The MQS's, the equivalent of Marine ITS's, were rapidly adopted.

In 1984, a second major study was conducted to validate the continued need for the MQS system and several other aspects of officer professional development. Its findings, the Professional Development of Officers Study, validated the RETO study. Today, the MQS system remains the foundation for the professional development of U.S. Army officers and is the source document that prescribes what officers are expected to be able to do.

Another deficiency is the absence of formal training for commanders above the platoon level. No school, course, or training activity has as its primary mission, to train company/battery, battalion/squadron, or MEU/regimental/group commanders. A formal preparatory course or training for commanders would be especially valuable for officers who spend a substantial amount of time between FMF tours. This is especially true for ground, field-grade officers.

A detailed review of officer schools also reveals a flawed reality behind what appears to be a sound, progressive school system. As noted earlier, 80-85 percent of the Career Level School (CLS) graduates are assigned to the FMF from school. Those officers, however, make up only 25 percent of the nearly 300 captains who return to the FMF each year.⁴⁹ The other 75 percent return from primarily non-FMF assignments with no formal training.

What the other 75 percent take to the FMF can be logically inferred from the results of a Basic Combat Skills Inventory Examination given to arriving students at AWS. One recent class

produced the following results:

10 percent had full understanding of the tactical skills tested...50 percent had a basic understanding of the tactical skills tested...and 40 percent had no understanding of the tactical skills tested.⁵⁰

The situation may even be more critical. Captains selected to attend CLS are competitively selected by Headquarters Marine Corps from among all captains. The selection rate is approximately 25 percent. If 40 percent of the top 25 percent have no understanding of the basic combat skills in question, what percentage of understanding exists among the 75 percent of the captains in the FMF who are not selected to attend AWS?

Results of this magnitude cannot possibly be the responsibility of the individual Marine, as implied by MCO P1553.4! Rather, it is an indictment of the officer training and education system--or lack thereof.

At the MCC&SC level, the proportions change. Only 20-25 percent of the class is assigned to the FMF after school. Traditionally, the curriculum has reflected the fact that it will be the last PME school over 90 percent of the Marine officers attend. Consequently, the C&SC curriculum has emphasized future service requirements in a wide range of assignments, both FMF and non-FMF. While there is obvious merit to that approach, there is also a cost. That cost is in reduced FMF emphasis, which directly impacts on Corps-wide combat readiness.

The most serious flaw, however, is the number of officers that attend school. Conceptually, captains go to Career Level School, majors go to Intermediate Level School, and lieutenant

colonels and colonels go to Top Level School. Beyond the individual school statistics already cited, the House of Representatives' Military Education Panel reported that "90 percent of Marine lieutenant colonels attended either AWS or MCC&SC (or other service equivalent), but, that less than 20 percent attended both!"⁵¹ That statistic, perhaps more than any other, reflects the limitations in attendance at resident PME schools by career officers. In the previously cited survey of 50 field-grade officers, 86 percent believed that more officers attend PME schools than actually do.⁵²

Additionally, comparing the Marine Corps school structure with that of the U.S. Army reveals an Army school for which there is no Marine Corps equivalent--the Combined Arms Services and Staff School (CAS³). Collocated with the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, over 95 percent of all Army captains attend this nine-week school. Students must complete a 120 hour nonresident module and pass a comprehensive examination before attending the resident portion. The purpose of CAS³ is:

To train officers of the active Army and Reserve Component to function as staff officers with the Army in the field. The course goals are to provide students the ability to analyze and solve military problems, provide the students the ability to interact and coordinate as a member of a staff, to improve communication skills, and to gain a basic understanding of Army organizations, operations and procedures.⁵³

The CAS³ concept was a product of the previously mentioned RETO Study. Typically, captains will attend CAS³ after Career Level School and commanding a company, but before getting promoted to major. This course is mandatory for all officers in

Year Group 1979 and later. It is significant because it focuses on field staff work, allowing Career and Intermediate Level Schools to devote more time to basic combat skills and command-oriented subjects.

Professional trainers and educators who have reviewed the Marine Corps PME system have been very critical of its over-reliance on nonresident study and education. Allan Millett, historian and Marine Reserve Colonel, is one such critic. In an award-winning essay in the Marine Corps Gazette, he explained:

The Marine Corps PME program places an unrealistic burden on self-study and correspondence study. There are very good reasons that civilian professions do not regard noninstitutionalized study as the equivalent of formal education and evaluation, and these same reasons apply to officership. There is no substitute for hands-on faculty guidance, peer interaction, and live educational experience.

Despite pronouncements by the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the President of the Marine Corps University on the equality of nonresident study, Marines overwhelmingly side with Millett. Nonresident education has limitations. It cannot duplicate the experiences of a resident school or make up for an inadequate number of resident school seats.

The Marine Corps has made substantial improvements to its training and education system. The problems discussed in this section are the remaining obstacles to ensuring the readiness of the officer corps for the challenges of the future. Solving them will not be easy--especially in view of the impending cuts to the budget and force structure. Now is not the time for timidity or minor adjustments. Bold, decisive action is required!

The actions of the U.S. Army, led by TRADOC Commander, General William A. DePuy, in the mid-1970's, serve as a case study and methodology worth considering. General DePuy analyzed the existing training philosophy, goals, and structure in view of the greatly changed, post-Vietnam world of 1975. His analysis, "Strategic Realities and Training,"⁵⁴ portrayed an outdated Army training system that

...did not meet the changed circumstances of the Army. To support a small, volunteer force that had to be ready to deploy overseas instantly against superior numbers, the training establishment would have to produce soldiers and officers who were thoroughly proficient in the skills required of them immediately after graduation. This meant better (but, for budgetary reasons, not always longer) and more thorough training focused on the officer's current grade. Consequently, DePuy directed that the schools shift the focus of their curricula in order to prepare officers for their immediate assignment after schooling...⁵⁵

In many ways, the "strategic realities" that Marines face today are very similar to those encountered by General DePuy in 1975. A small force, getting even smaller, with less money, but, having to remain ready to deploy world-wide on short notice to fight and win with minimum loss of life. Perhaps some of the solutions are also similar!

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this review of officer training and education, and the "strategic realities" of the present, now is the time to make the changes required to prepare the Marine Corps for the challenges of the future. Six substantial changes should be made

to the officer training and education system.

- * Develop a single comprehensive system that manages all officer training, education, and professional development from pre-commissioning to retirement.

- * Establish an Individual Training Standards (ITS) system for officers of all grades and MOS's.

- * Increase the emphasis on warfighting skills for all officers at the career and intermediate levels of professional military education.

- * Increase the emphasis on the tactical and operational requirements of the current grade of officer students.

- * Establish specific training for company/battery, battalion/squadron, and MEU/regimental/group commanders.

- * Increase the number of officers who receive formal, resident training and education.

Developing a comprehensive "system" to manage the training, education, and professional development of all officers is the first priority. This system must articulate the vision, strategy, and plan for creating a highly-educated and well-trained, combat ready officer corps. Additionally, it must assign responsibilities to formal schools and training centers, unit commanders, and individual officers to provide specified parts of the system. Finally, it must plan, program, and allocate the resources required by the schools, unit commanders, and individuals to accomplish their responsibilities.

The Marine Corps orders that govern training and education

clearly plan for Individual Training Standards (ITS's) for officers. ITS's are to be the basics for determining formal school curricula. Additionally, when combined with Mission Performance Standards (MPS's) for units, they also drive unit training.

These ITS's are important and long overdue. MCCDC should devise an accelerated plan and give it the priority it requires to complete this painstaking, but important process. Like the U.S. Army's Military Qualification Standards System, it will be the source document that articulates what the Marine Corps expects its officers--of all ranks and specialties--to be able to do on the battlefields of the future.

Increasing the "warfighting emphasis" for all officers at the career and intermediate levels does not mean making every one a combat arms officer! Rather, it means increasing the training and education emphasis on performing common battlefield tasks required of all officers, and the tasks of their respective Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). Electives and expansion courses should also emphasize battlefield concerns. Increasing the emphasis on what officers will be required to do on the battlefields of the future will keep the curriculum focus on performance and accomplishment-based instruction.

All PME schools and formal training courses should increase the emphasis on the tactical and operational requirements of the current grade of their students. This emphasis includes both staff and command requirements. In the process, tactical "staff"

topics must be given the appropriate focus. Although this change will reduce the requirement to think and act at higher levels, it certainly is not intended to eliminate it. This is clearly not an "either or" issue, but, one of balance.

Currently missing from the Marine Corps' training system is formal training for commanders. It should be incorporated at the company/battery, battalion/squadron, and MEU/regimental, group levels. The goal should be commanders who are trained, ready, and prepared to **"fight their units" the day after they assume command**--not after a six or twelve month workup! Our Marines, their families, and our country expect that much; certainly, the Corps should do no less.

AWS should not be made a "company commander's school." It consists of many officers whose MOS's do not have command opportunities for captains. The school must also provide the combat staff training those officers need. The school is, however, a captive audience of competitively selected captains, 80 to 85 percent of which will report to the FMF after school. A restructuring of the core curriculum and the Occupational Field Expansion Course (OFEC) within the Program of Instruction (POI) would generally equate to such a course for those captains who will command as captains.

The challenge will be the large number of FMF-bound captains who do not attend AWS. A four to six week course has been debated for years. The time for debate is over; the time for action is here. A Company Commander's Course should be

established for captains who do not attend a Career Level School. A standard curriculum should be established by MAGTEC, and schools could be run at Quantico, Camp Lejeune, and Camp Pendleton or Twentynine Palms.

The Marine Corps' decision to implement a formal Command Screening/Selection process for colonels and lieutenant colonels will identify those officers who should attend command or pre-command training. Since these selections are made nine to 20 months prior to assuming command, adequate time exists for individual officers and their units to plan for this training. The Army's Pre-Command Course can certainly serve as a methodology and a starting model. While the Marine Corps numbers are much smaller than that of the Army, the responsibility of commanding combat units at those levels is just as great, and just as important.

One of the toughest actions to accommodate given the strategic and fiscal realities, will be to increase the number of officers who receive formal, resident training and education. It does not necessarily mean putting more officers into existing formal schools. It may mean trimming the length of existing PME schools to create smaller, shorter courses without increasing the training overhead. It may also mean adding a nonresident module prior to resident schools to accommodate material that is conducive to a nonresident mode. This action would make more appropriate use of nonresident instruction and reduce the current "training overhead."

As part of this initiative, the Marine Corps must be more candid about the equality of nonresident education. It is not equal to resident schools, and therefore, cannot "count the same." Nonresident courses can parallel resident schools, but, cannot mirror them. The company line is out of line.

The ancient proverb of Confucius highlighted the superior value of "doing." Doing is the essence of training. Unlike the beliefs of many well-intentioned officers, training is not rote memorizing, or regurgitating facts. It can include skills such as military judgment, command in combat, tactical decision-making, operational art, strategic thinking, and most "soft" skills. ~~Hearing~~ and ~~seeing~~, alone, will rarely result in competence. Doing will produce true understanding and skill proficiency.

As America's First Battles emphasized, it is the readiness and combat leadership skills of the leaders that will determine success or failure in future "first battles." Consequently, the degree of readiness and the quality of the combat skills the Marine Corps will take to its next battle are being determined by the training and education officers are receiving today. Failing to train and educate the officer corps the very best we can, with the battlefield--not the beltway--in mind, will begin to write another unforgiving chapter in the book of America's First Battles!

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